

REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

DATE: February 9, 2016

PURPOSE: For Information

DEADLINE DATE: N/A

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BACKGROUND:

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site is situated east of the City of Houston along I-10 and once operated as a paper mill pulp disposal site. The pits were built in the mid-1960s along the banks of the San Jacinto River for disposal of pulp wastes containing dioxins. The former waste pits are currently partially submerged due to subsidence. In 2008, the site was added to the National Priorities List and in 2009, EPA issued an order to International Paper Company and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation, the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs), to conduct a site investigation. A removal action was also completed by the PRP's in July 2011 to install a temporary armor cap over the impoundments. The Site has experienced several extreme weather events since the cap was completed.

CURRENT STATUS:

- The EPA Dive Team completed an inspection of the submerged portions of the armored cap on December 10, 2015, and found a damaged area in the northwest area of the armored cap.
- In response to EPA's directive, the PRPs delineated the damaged area and collected sediment samples on December 23, 2015.
- Following EPA approval of the PRPs repair plan, repair of the damaged area was completed on December 31, 2015.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

- Bathymetric surveys during inspections did not indicate cap deficiencies. Inspections initially done quarterly & now twice per year. Last semi-annual inspection on October 2015 and the last storm-event visual inspection 2 weeks later in October 2015.
- Cause of damage is unknown.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

- Absence of the armor rock could expose contaminated soils and may result in a release of dioxins/furans to the San Jacinto River. Samples near the repaired area did not contain dioxin from waste pits.

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Verbally notified PRPs on December 11th, regarding the gap in the cap and the need to repair. Notified PRPs in writing December 16th to submit a repair plan in accordance with Operation, Monitoring & Maintenance plan.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS/OUTREACH:

- Texans Together (a community organization), Harris County, Galveston Bay Foundation, and others have expressed desires that the waste material be removed due to concerns about the long-term ability of any cap to withstand the extreme flooding.
- Community meeting planned for 2/17/2016 to describe December cap inspection & repair, sediment sampling results, and next steps (additional inspections, surveillance & Corps of Engineers studies on cap compromised area & remedial alternatives)

RECOMMENDATIONS/SCHEDULE:

- Install cameras for enhanced surveillance. (March 2016)
- Install additional buoys around cap, (March 2016)
- Develop additional cap protective measures. (April 2016)
- Develop enhanced inspection procedures (April 2016)



Placing geotextile over repair area.



Placing Type C Rock (8" median diameter) on top of geotextile layer in repair area.